

## PREPARATION

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Spend the week studying Matthew 16:13-19. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

**DETERMINE** | which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group

**PRAY** | for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

**LANDING POINT** | Central to the church is the confession of Christ Jesus as the Messiah.

### ◦ Remember the 4 Rules for Small Group Discussion

1. **Confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. **No cross-talk.** Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.
3. **No fixing.** We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.
4. **Sharing.** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

## INTRODUCTION

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**As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.**

At Pinelake, we're a people committed to living the Jesus-centered life. No matter where you are in your faith journey or what your past experiences, the blueprint you'll hear in this five-week sermon series can show you the next step, can bring a fresh perspective, can help you move forward. These are the values that connect us and give us purpose. God can weave them together in your life to bring change and growth in your relationship with Jesus.

As a church, we're here to equip you and to prepare you for whatever comes your way. We work together to know where to start, to see growth and to experience real change. That's what family is all about. That's Our House.

This is more than a sermon series. This is who we are. We're building our house one story at a time.

This week, we will look at the importance of Christ and how He is the foundation upon which our faith family is built. Through Christ's life, death, and resurrection, salvation is offered. This is the Jesus we worship. This is the Jesus we proclaim. This is the Jesus whom our faith is based. When we know and understand who Jesus is and what He has done and called us to, we then learn more of what we as a faith family should look like.

**What comes to mind when you think of church? Why is it important to be a part of a faith family?**

 LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

## ◉ Knowing Jesus

Have someone read aloud Matthew 16:13-19.

The focal point of this passage is the identity of Jesus. Who is He? What are people saying about him? Jesus poses the question of his identity to the disciples, asking who the culture believes him to be. The truth is, the answers given don't come close to being as significant as Jesus' true identity. A prophet? John the Baptist? He is not merely a prophet. He's not merely a teacher. He's so much more than that. He's the Son of God. He's the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior.

In the dialogue, Peter's confession is central. When Jesus asks his disciples directly, Peter responds with truth. This intimate group comes to learn that Jesus is the King promised for centuries. He is the Shepherd who has come to bring God's people back to Him.

The disciples were with Jesus. They spent time with him. In this passage, this is one of the key takeaways: as followers of Christ, we must know Him intimately.

**What does it look like to know Jesus intimately?**

**How did the disciples know Jesus in a different way than the surrounding culture? What does that mean for us?**

## ◉ Keys of Authority

Jesus says that He has given us the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. He has given us authority to proclaim the gospel and know that belief in Jesus saves. This is why we can proclaim the gospel with authority. Jesus has given us the key that gets into the kingdom of God: Himself. He's released us from death and sin.

Christ has given us his Spirit. Because of this, we have the freedom and authority to share his message of freedom and life that comes with believing in Christ. This is the nature of evangelism. What we do here in His name matters forever.

**How does this passage give us confidence as we share Christ in our work places, resident halls, neighborhoods and daily lives?**

## LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

### ◦ Which Jesus?

It's no secret that today's culture, and culture throughout the history, has come up with different versions and identities of who Christ is. Culture gives many forms of morality and the basis of how we know right from wrong. In understanding Jesus, we need to know we have the right Jesus. The Jesus we proclaim is the Christ of the Old Testament, the Christ according to the Scriptures, who came to defeat sin and death and was God and man. That is the Jesus we believe in and that is the Jesus that grants life.

Who does culture say Jesus is?

Why does knowing the true nature of Jesus determine how we live our lives?

### ◦ Gathered Body of Christ Followers

The term ekklesia used in this passage is the gathered body of Christ's followers. Just like the disciples, the church is the gathered place of people that know Jesus intimately.

We gather because we are now within God's household. That is the nature of our house. He has broken down barriers and brought us into his family. Now that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, we are one body. The you that Jesus uses when he asks the disciples is plural. He is asking them collectively. This foundation of Christ's identity is what the church stands on.

Why is gathering as a faith family vital to our health and maturity as believers?

## LEAD

Select 1 question from this section to ask your group.

### ◦ Remind Each Other

As we attend our house and as we gather in our church, may we lead out knowing that we must remind each other of the saving knowledge of Christ. We remind each other of what he has done and who God is. We remind each other why we are here. We remind each other of Christ. We remind each other of our confession, that Christ is the Saving One.

This is why we sing. We worship as we gather in order that we may stir each other up to good works and right beliefs. The church is a family, a corporate gathering of spiritual relatives. In sorrow and in trials and in joys and in pleasure, we remind one another of Jesus.

## LEAD [cont'd]

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Why do we need reminding of Jesus' saving work? Why is it easy to forget the gospel and its power?

Knowing that gathering at church should be a reminder of Christ's work, how does this inform our worship?

### ◦ Be a Peter

Be confident in your confession. Martin Luther said that all who declare Peter's confession are Peters themselves and set themselves on a sure foundation. Be strong. Be confident. When asked, declare Jesus for who he is and what he has done. John 20:30 says that the things written concerning Jesus were done so that we would know Jesus is the Christ, and there is life in Him.

Let your life be grounded on Peter's confession. Be a Peter. Be bold in confessing Christ.

What does it look like to be a Peter in your world? Where are opportunities for us to speak up concerning Christ?

As Christians, how do we get this wrong at times? How can we learn to proclaim truth with love?

## PRAY

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Thank God for Jesus. Confess your continued need for Him and your gratitude for your salvation.

## FOLLOW UP

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Midway through the week send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

Read Colossians 1:15-23 and reflect on Christ's identity, authority, and rule.

Ask the group to respond with anything they have to share regarding Jesus and all that he is and has done. How does Colossians 1 create awe in our hearts toward God?

## COMMENTARY

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### • The Rock of the Church

This passage has been the center of debates. What is the nature of Peter? What does it mean that the church is founded on the rock? What Jesus says in these verses is that the church is made of people who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. That's the foundation of the church. That's what the church is built on. It's not about Peter. It's about his confession. The rock of the church is the people of God proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Rock is the Savior. This issue has been clouded with confusion because Scripture recognizes multiple images and metaphors for Jesus. He's the foundation in 1 Corinthians 3:11. He's the rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4. He's the cornerstone in Ephesians 2:20. But in Ephesians 2:19-20 it's the apostles and the prophets that are referred to as the foundation of the church. In 1 Corinthians 3:10 Paul says he laid the foundation. In these contexts, the declaration of those that Christ uses is the foundation. And what is the declaration? That Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of the Old Testament, the Christ according to the Scriptures. That is the firm foundation the church. [1]